



# Buzzwords ...

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..... the newsletter for National Beekeepers' Association members

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- \* New undersecretary
- \* Bee exports in jeopardy?
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## Buzzwords No 19 May 1990



"YES, THE AFRICANIZED HONEY BEE THREAT IS REAL, BUT YOU WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THEM THIS FAR AWAY."

### US BEE IMPORTS

The saga of getting our bees into the USA continues.

Gazetting the notice of this policy change in the US generated at least eight objections from US queen bee producers.

MAF, through our embassy in Washington, has responded to the points made. The main objections were that:

- \* We would disrupt their markets with large numbers of queens.
- \* Our queens are of poor quality.
- \* New Zealand queen bees would pose a disease risk.
- \* They aren't resistant to diseases and mites.
- \* There won't be any reciprocal trade in bees.

Support has come from the Florida Department of

Agriculture and Dr Jim Tew, a prominent beekeeping extension specialist.

The fast-track period for objections was extended to 30 days and closed on 2 April. Now we have to wait for the USDA to consider our responses and make a decision.

*MAF apiculture services*

### BEE EXPORTS IN JEOPARDY

Beekeepers seem to regard MAF's statement of inspection forms (due back 7 December) as a bureaucratic nuisance and therefore to be ignored. We in MAF don't generate all that paper just to keep Mr Caxton wealthy; they are a vital part of our intelligence on diseases in any given area.

We use this data to:

- \* Operate a local AFB inspection following an outbreak.
- \* Plan our disease-a-thons.
- \* Keep our apiary records up-to-date in case we have an outbreak of an exotic disease. The recent fruit fly outbreak in Auckland should focus your attention on the seriousness of this.
- \* Make a monthly declaration to the OIE (Organisation International Epizooties) in Paris on our bee disease status. Their report is then made available to all countries who may wish to buy our bees or honey.
- \* Plan our surveillance sampling programme for exotic bee diseases.
- \* Satisfy ourselves that the requirements of importing countries have been met before we certify your bees and honey for export.

As a result of a number of beekeepers not sending in their statements of inspection in one region, MAF cannot sign the export certificates for queen bees from an exporter. Now, this is serious and the exporter is trying to get his neighbours to comply. MAF is preparing a case to prosecute those who still refuse to co-operate.

This will affect exporters in other regions too, as we're all getting a bit tougher with those who do not comply with the law. If you are an exporter of bees or honey and require a mandatory (ie a zoosanitary certificate) remind your suppliers to ensure that they, and any of their neighbours owning hives within 5-8 km of a production apiary, have returned their statement of inspection forms.



We will be asking exporters to declare the location of all production apiaries, their own as well as suppliers, so we can check that the requirements of importing countries have been met.

The statement of inspection forms that we send to you are records built up over the years from data you have supplied to us. Now, if the order of apiaries, the apiary number or anything else is now out of sequence with your field books we will happily change our records. Just tell us what you want. We can also produce a short version for your records if you wish.

MAF is consulting with executive to find a more satisfactory time to administer the statement of inspection requirement. We believe an autumn or winter cycle will be much better for us as well as for beekeepers. However, we'll need to ensure that beekeepers report disease in their hives as they find it, and not leave it until they send back their returns.

*Murray Reid, MAF Apiculture Services*

## BRANCH NOTES

The **Bay of Plenty** branch field day was a resounding success. Over 80 people turned up for an enjoyable and informative day. Good tips for other branches: have a good programme of informative speakers; organise other activities for children so that people will come with their families and the field day isn't just "another day that Dad's away from home". Have some social activities (BBQ, hot swim) for everyone at the end of the day. Remember that the success of the programme is largely proportional to the amount of effort put in by the organisers beforehand.

The field day follows a successful winter programme in the Bay of Plenty. Their winter meetings have all featured a guest speaker, with topics ranging from 1080 poisoning and fumagillin feeding to Brother Adam and Iranian beekeeping.

## NEW UNDERSECRETARY

The Minister of Agriculture usually has at least one undersecretary to assist him in carrying out his duties. The beekeeping industry normally deals with the undersecretary, who is given responsibility for beekeeping and horticulture. Beekeeping's undersecretary has now changed. Previously Ralph Maxwell, Ken Shirley the Associate Minister of Agriculture now has responsibility for all matters related to the beekeeping industry. Your executive will soon be meeting with Mr Shirley to discuss matters of concern to the industry.

## WATCH THESE DATES

Don't forget that conference will be early this year; 8-14 July in Rarotonga.

This means that remits have to be at the NBA's Wellington office by Friday 25 May 1990.

Another date to note is the close of nominations for three seats on executive - 5 pm on Friday 11 May. Nominatic forms were in last month's issue, and are also available from the office at Box 4048 Wellington or your local branch.

## EXECUTIVE AT WORK

There's a mammoth amount of legislation under review at the moment, covering subjects including trucking, pesticides, land use and the environment.

One new bill that your executive looked at recently was the Resource Management Bill - all 313 pages of it.

The NBA's executive officer, Ted Roberts, examined the bill to see if there was anything affecting the beekeeping industry, which the NBA needs to make submissions on.

The bill restructures the responsibilities of the central, regional and local government, and their controls over air, land, water, coastal, and mineral resources. It reorganises the systems for control over resources and the granting of approvals and licences.

There is nothing in the bill that affects our industry at this stage, though some action will be needed in future.

Further down the track and as a consequence of this bill, regional and district councils will be bringing down the new equivalents of "district schemes". It is at this stage that there may be an impact on beekeeping operations. At present different local authorities treat beekeeping in many and various ways. It could well be desirable to be pro-active here and for the industry to develop "model clauses" relating to beekeeping, and have them available to local authorities before they conclude their district schemes. Your executive will consider this at a future meeting.

*NBA executive*

## DIVERSIFICATION

People looking for a market for their propolis could contact Comvita Laboratories, fax (075) 31 118.

## A TV OPPORTUNITY

Alison Holst is going to produce a new TV series *Missionary to Microwave*. The focus will be on food and location.

The producers are on the look out for stories, characters and locations which would be appropriate to feature in programmes. What about a local recipe or even a regional cuisine?

Any leads? Contact Food Media on (04) 859 264 or fax (04) 848 351.

## EL NINO VISITS AGAIN

Recent television reports suggest that we could be heading for another El Nino or southern oscillation in our weather. This pattern will bring moist air flows to the West Coast and droughts to the East. Another interesting news item was that all the Cyclone Bola relief which went to the East Coast has gone to repairing immediate damage, and none has gone toward providing long term solutions to land instability problems. That means that if another Bola happens again, which is quite likely, the results will be the same as in 1988.

Regardless of exactly how the climate will change over the next 50 years, it is evident that farming practices are going to have to change if New Zealand is going to survive as an agricultural nation.

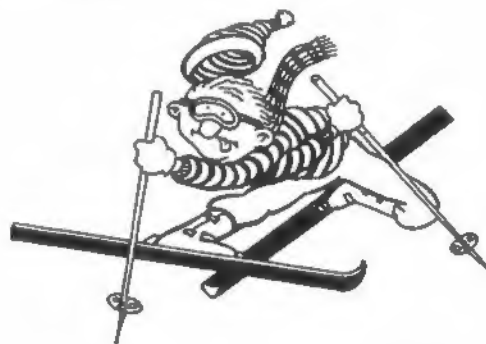
This affects you as a beekeeper. You are dependent on the viability of New Zealand's agriculture for much of your honey production.

Once again people are turning their attention to diversifying land use. People are once again turning their attention to agroforestry and permaculture. A MAF economist has recently joined forces with the Ministry of Forestry to carry out an extensive evaluation on agroforestry for Otago. Peter Jarvis has discovered that the region could have a tremendous

future in combining sheep and trees. The investigation demonstrated that Otago has the land and climate to produce trees or pulp and clearwood, as well as grazing sheep and cattle on the same land.

Permaculture also needs to be looked at. This involves enhancing land use situations with mutually beneficial plantings and careful positionings of plants, animals and buildings. It goes beyond land and includes the design of buildings and even of social structures, emphasising interdependence and conservation of energy. Permaculture is all about growing animals, crops and trees in a self sufficient way which does not need large energy inputs.

Some beekeepers have long been interested in trees and tree crops as a way of diversifying their nectar sources. Beekeepers will need to become increasingly interested in this area if we are to withstand the effects of future droughts. The Treecrops Association is holding its annual conference at Wesley College, Paerata (near Pukekohe) from 11-14 May. The conference this year will be looking at conservation of our resources, especially soil conservation, organic growing and land use in relation to tree crops. There will be field trips as part of the programme. Information is available from the conference secretary, Murtle Pask, RD2 Waiouku, phone (085) 59248.



## AFRICAN BEES STILL MOVING

A swarm of African honey bees was collected by USDA in the State of Tamaulipa in Mexico on 11 November 1989. This is the northern-most detection of African honey bees, placing the leading edge of their range 250 km from Brownsville, Texas.

A swarm of African honey bees was found on board a ship in Brownsville, Texas, on 30 October 1989. This was an incidental introduction and does not signify the permanent arrival of the African honey bee in Texas. The swarm was destroyed.

## WORLD HONEY MARKET

There are some dramatic changes in the honey market for 1989, as recently reported by the US Department of Agriculture. Overall production in selected major producing countries in 1989 was almost the same as that for the previous year, at 691 000 tonnes. The big change though is in the trading of honey in 1989, imports in countries covered by the report rose 14% over 1988. This increase in trade was

driven by a crop shortfall in the United States which resulted in an increase in their imports of around 56%. Japanese imports were also expected to rise for 1989.

Major country consumption of honey has risen steadily since the early 1980s, reflecting a growing demand among high income consumers in industrialised countries, as well as increased use of honey by food processors.

End of year stocks in the major countries are projected to be 39% down in 1989 because of a near halving of stocks in the US and Canada. This follows on the 16% decrease in stocks for 1988, and so will lead to a very low level of carryover for 1990 which implies higher honey prices.

US honey production in 1989 was down 22% from the previous year, at 75 000 tonnes. Imports of honey increased, as was mentioned above, and it is interesting that shortage was especially acute in light amber and darker categories. Imports of darker honey more than doubled during the first eight months of the year, accounting for more than half of all 1989 imports rather than the usual one-third. So strong is the import demand for darker honey, that the average price has been driven above that for lighter grades.

The United States is likely to remain a net honey import in the foreseeable future, even given a return to normal production conditions.

## JAPANESE HONEY MARKET

The market for honey and other bee products in Japan was discussed by Sue Walker in her address to last year's conference in Dunedin. Her talk can be read in the issue of the New Zealand Beekeeper, and is well worth re-reading if you are interested in penetrating this market.

The United States National Honey Board recently undertook a study visit to Japan, and some of their findings were discussed in January's issue of the American Bee Journal.

They report that the Japanese beekeeping industry is small in numbers and production, but is influential politically. (How do they do it?). They strongly support the current duty on imported honey of 30%.

There are more beekeepers in Japan than in New Zealand, 8800, though between them they only operate 269 000 colonies. Average production is only 18 kg/hive.

Honey and honey products can be found in several locations in the large department stores, and the variety of containers is extremely attractive. The fastest growth in the use of honey is in beverages such as soft drinks, which are mainly fruit based. Coin operated soft drink dispensers are seen everywhere.

Honey sticks are also common, and are packed in round plastic vials. Children take these to school with their lunches.

The Japanese perceive honey to be a natural health food, and a bee symbol is added to packaging to assist people in locating products that contain honey. Honey adds value,

and Japanese consumers are willing to pay extra when honey is used as a sweetener. The use of honey has increased a lot in Japan since World War II, as their diet has become much more westernised, though their consumption is still nothing like that of traditional honey-using countries such as Germany. The average annual consumption in Japan is only 300 g per person.

The American study team reported that nearly every conversation they had concerning the perception of honey in Japan stressed the preference for mild-flavoured, light-coloured honeys. Despite that they report, it was not uncommon to find citrus honey, safflower honey and "New Zealand Christmas berry honey".

A visit to a honey packing farm provided some insights to the way the Japanese prepare their honey. The largest plant used an ultra membrane filtration method to supply consistent quality honey to the beverage industry. The finished product is clear and water-white with most of the honey aroma, pollen and protein removed.

This packing plant sells 58% of its honey to the table market and 42% to industrial use. Of the 27 000 tonnes sold for table use, 50% goes through stores, 20% is sold by beekeepers, 15% by unions, 10% by department stores, and 5% by mail order businesses and pharmacies.

The questions the Japanese ask most frequently were:

- Where can we obtain plain colour honey with a mild taste?
- Where can we obtain a consistent supply?
- Why do we see so much variety of colour and taste in US honey?
- Why is US honey of a certain type not available every year?
- We like orange honey but the quality is not consistent from year to year.
- Is US honey free of pesticides and contaminants?
- How can we establish long term commitments with your people?

Substitute the words New Zealand for US, and you will gain some understanding of what is needed to break into this market.

## BUZZWORDS IS ...

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